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Children. A Lecture  
delivered in Clifford's  
Inn, January, 1905. By  
Jonathan Hutchinson,  
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ON

# Educational Reform ; School Museums ; and the Feeding of School Children.

*A Lecture delivered in Clifford's Inn, January, 1905.*

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I AM proposing to deal this evening with three different topics, any one of which might well take up the whole of the time at my disposal. It may be well, therefore, that I should make my plunge without preamble. I simply ask you to be kind enough to take what I have to suggest as thrown before you for your consideration, and not as implying any overweening desire to propound novelties or to exalt the importance of my own opinions.

Probably there never was a time when the various problems which are concerned in the question of education were receiving more earnest attention. On all hands it is recognised that human happiness depends upon the right comprehension of the conditions under which human life must be passed, and that some acquisition obtained in youth as to the facts of the universe, and the prospects and

obligations which those facts imply, is an essential preliminary to right conduct. The present generation acknowledges its duties in this matter in a manner which no previous one ever did. Elementary education has been made compulsory, and far higher teaching has been developed, and universities have been multiplied. No week passes that we do not read reports of meetings in which those concerned in teaching have assembled together in conclave to discuss its methods and to suggest its improvement. The spirit which is abroad is earnest and sincere, and it would be ungrateful in a high degree not to acknowledge that much has been accomplished. Yet some sense of disappointment is general.

A leader in the *Times* of a fortnight ago had the following sentence: "An impartial survey of our public school system inspires not so much lament over failure or incompetence as regret that being so good it is not educationally much better." This statement well expresses my own feelings and not improbably those of most of us.

Is it possible to suggest any large improvement? I think it is; and that I may not be thought presumptuous, I may be permitted to say that, although not by profession a schoolmaster, I have been engaged in teaching all my life, and that in connection with my own profession I have taken a fair share in the conduct of examinations. What I am about to propose is not brought forward for the first time. The main point in my chief proposal is a sweeping reform in our examination methods. Make examinations more uniform, rid them as far as possible of all uncertainty, and then leave both

student and teacher for the most part untrammelled by curricula. An element of most vexatious uncertainty at present attaches to all our public examinations. The candidate's chances are left to depend far too much upon the personality—I had almost said the caprices and prejudices—of the examiner. Nor does a knowledge of their scope afford to the student that assistance in guiding his studies which they might, I cannot but believe, easily be made to give.

Take away from the examiner all right to ask extemporised questions. Prepare and print lists of carefully considered questions in all branches of knowledge, and let these be published and obtainable by all students. The questions should be brief, explicit, and admitting of brief, definite answers. They should be such as would enable the candidate to display his knowledge or reveal his ignorance in very few words, often perhaps in a single one. These lists of questions would not be of the nature of catechisms, for they would give no answers and would convey no information excepting in so far as a well-stated interrogatory may often serve to rearrange facts already known and place them in a clearer light. On each several subject these lists of questions would be adapted to different ages and different stages of education ; some would be quite elementary, others might go deeply into the topics concerned.

The advantages claimed for restricting the examiner to the use of prearranged questions are : (1) that by so doing a nearer approach to uniformity in the results of examinations conducted at different places and by different bodies would be obtainable,

and (2) that none of the questions could possibly be left in obscure improvised phraseology, and lastly, that the predilections of the examiner would be eliminated.

The advantages of anticipatory and free publication of the questions would be that they would serve as guides alike for study and for teaching, would afford a standard as to what was considered attainable, and would give assurance that in the examination-hall no novelties and no enigmas would be encountered. They would shield the student from the risk of overlooking his ignorance, and would enable him to submit himself to the examination test in confidence that in doing so he would be sailing in well-accustomed waters, and would have only to give proof that by diligent practice he had obtained skill in his craft. It will, of course, be said, that the publication beforehand of questions will lead both teacher and pupil to work on narrow lines. Answers to the questions will be prepared and committed to memory, and no attempt made to go beyond. In reply to this I would say that the questions would be so numerous that the answers to them would involve pretty much a knowledge of the whole subject. They would also be so contrived as to be the very pith of the matter, and to involve trustworthy knowledge. A certain amount of cramming and learning by rote is inseparable from all examinations, but such methods would prove no more successful under the scheme proposed than under others. The student who could answer with confidence whether or not it was possible that the author of Hamlet might have read Don Quixote, or whether Bunyan might



have possessed a copy of the *Faery Queen*, would find it better policy to have taken interest in the subjects than to have trusted to rote memory unassisted by associations. The candidate who could say "yes" or "no" to the question whether a giraffe has more bones in his neck than a pig might do so certainly as the result simply of memory, but in learning his lesson he could not well have avoided realising one of the most important generalisations in comparative anatomy. In petrology such a question as, how would you make sure whether a stone contained carbonate of lime, although very elementary, would imply practical knowledge not likely to be forgotten. It is to be understood that such questions would be prepared by the thousand, and that at every examination the student would have to answer explicitly at least twenty of them.

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Under the scheme proposed, the first duty of the Education Office would be the preparation of the lists of questions. These should be collated with the utmost care and should be adapted to various stages of attainment. Some should refer to special branches, and some to general or all-round knowledge. They would need revision from time to time, and new editions should be published at short intervals. With each revision improvements both in conciseness and comprehensiveness might be expected, and the lists would eventually become excellent guides to attainable information.

The next duty would be to appoint a large staff of examiners. These might be of a somewhat different class from those now engaged in examining. The work would be that in which young men, if

intelligent, might suitably be employed, or school teachers who had retired from active duty. Far less latitude of judgment would be allowed to the examiner than under the present system. He would simply have to read and say whether a certain question, the answer to which was well known, was given correctly or not. The documents upon which he reported would be filed and open to the inspection of a superintendent. At present the post of examiner is coveted as one of honour and often of considerable emolument. The better class of such appointments are rarely obtained before middle age, and then often by those whose thoughts and time are already much occupied. Under the proposed scheme I fear the honour would almost vanish and the emoluments be reduced. Instead of feeling an expert to give his judgment as to the weight of the fatted calf, we should put the latter into the scales and register the result. I fear I have here used a simile too homely for my topic, but really the aim should be to make the examination, as nearly as practicable, resemble a measuring or weighing. In my Liverpool address ten years ago I find that I expressed myself as follows: "Examinations should be made as little distasteful as possible. To this end it is essential, in the first place, that the element of uncertainty should as far as possible be eliminated. The candidate ought to feel throughout his studies that in presenting himself to an examiner he does that which is equivalent to placing himself on a weighing-machine, and that the verdict recorded will be in exact relation to his deserts. In proportion as the hope is indulged that success may



be attained by good luck will thoroughness of study be neglected; and just as it may be possible to suspect that the mood of the examiner, the complexity of a question, or some other accidental circumstance may have influenced the result, will be the disappointment and vexation of a pluck."

At another place I have said that

"The student should go before the examiner in the same quiet mood that he would go to his master in gymnastics, to show how much he can lift, how high he can jump, and how fast he can run, and he should be enabled to believe that there will be as little room for error in estimation in the one case as the other. From a failure under such conditions he would return to further efforts, disappointed, it is true, but with no vexatious sense of possible injustice, and of yet future uncertainty, mingling with his chagrin and embittering his pursuits."

If I may again read from the address which I have quoted:—

"I have done a good deal of coaching myself, and have formed a very strong opinion that the best way to assist a candidate for a pass-examination is to give him clear ideas. The number of students who are either really idle or really dull is not great, but the number of those who, for want of guidance as to how to work, fail to gain all that they might from their labours, is very large. Now it is as aids to study that these books of questions would be most useful. Not only would they place reasonable limitations on the ingenuity of the examiner, but they would throughout the whole of his course give valuable assistance to the student. They would to some extent take the place of the coach, and give to the home student the same sort of advantages that are found in tutors' class-rooms. By their aid he would find out where his knowledge was deficient or

weak. Definiteness would be given by a well-directed question to many a subject which had remained only hazy after a diligent course of reading. It is, perhaps, going a little wide of my topic, but I should like to add that I believe such books would be largely used by amateur students not intending to offer themselves for any examination. They would form excellent guides for self-education. It is true that many student's books contain lists of questions which the student may use if he likes. The fact that such have been published is testimony to their value, and I feel sure that such value would be greatly increased if the questions were issued under some authoritative sanction, and were known to have been carefully prepared. Let me illustrate my meaning. I am myself much interested in geology. Now if a good question-catechism having the sanction of known authorities were extant, I should buy it; it would be the companion of my reading, and it would doubtless be the means of making me definitely conscious of much ignorance, and thus conducing to its removal."

It is surely needless to point out that the books of examination questions here proposed would come before the student with a cogency which the lists now appended to many educational works can never possess, since they would be known to be those from which a selection would be made, *ipsisimms verbis*, at his final.

An important additional guarantee against mere cramming would be afforded by making a large part of the examination depend upon the objective recognition of specimens. In order to be able to name correctly a flower, a bone, a portrait, or a bit of rock, direct acquaintance with those objects must have been had beforehand. This suggestion leads me at once to the second department of my proposals, that which concerns the development of objective education. I have to plead for the formation of

#### *Educational Museums.*

The scope of Educational Museums such as

contemplated in the present proposal would differ so much from that of our time-honoured institutions bearing the name of "Museum," that it were almost to be desired to find for them some new designation.<sup>1</sup> They would be constituted with a view to objective instruction in all branches of knowledge, would be an integral part of the school, and might to a considerable extent supersede the class-room. They would, it is true, contain specimens in all departments of natural history, zoology, botany, geology, &c., but in addition there would be map rooms, portrait galleries, picture galleries, and vivaria. On their walls would also be found schedules for the simplification of chronology, diagrams for astronomy and pictorial illustrations in all branches of natural science. No attempt would be made to secure rarities or to pursue any branch in the spirit of the collector, but at the same time no pains would be spared to so display common objects as to make their lessons easy of comprehension. It is needless

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<sup>1</sup> The following is an extract from a paper which I read before a meeting of the Museums Association in July, 1893:—

"It may perhaps be suggested that I am only giving a new name to what is already known as the School Museum. I should be very glad if I thought that such were the fact. Museums to which the pupils have access exist, I believe, at many public and private schools. I am not, however, acquainted with any which has aimed at anything approaching completeness as a means of education. Too often they are merely receptacles for curiosities of the neighbourhood, and of such natural history specimens as the boys may have got together. They are excellent in their way, much better than nothing; but they do not approach the scope of what a museum ought to be as an instrument in the hands of the teacher."

to say that descriptive labels would abound, for the museum would be regarded as a place for study. I have, indeed, at times been bold enough to think that it might be well to speak not of the "School-Museum" but of the "Museum-School," and thus recognise the objective department as the basis of the educational establishment. For the present, however, we must deal with the existing state of things and confine our aims to the formation of museums in connection with ordinary schools.

It will be asked how it would be possible to develop such collections in connection with all schools. The reply is ready. The museum need not be a permanent one, at any rate as regards the greater part of its contents. It might be on display during vacations only. All that the school need supply would be large rooms, a few strong but cheaply made display cases, plenty of trestle-tables. Then let a central dépôt, aided by local voluntary effort, do the rest.<sup>1</sup> The specimens, the maps, the

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<sup>1</sup> The suggestion of such a dépôt was made in the paper from which I have quoted :—

"I would suggest that a central dépôt for the supply of type specimens at little more than cost price should be formed. For this object subscriptions to a guarantee fund would perhaps be needed. I have little doubt, however, that under good management the dépôt might be made to pay its own expenses.

"Such a dépôt as has been suggested might also suitably arrange for the loan of certain objects, and especially of maps, drawings, and illustrative apparatus of a character too expensive to be bought by local committees."

I had much hoped that an association might have been formed to carry out some such plan as this, but as twelve years have passed without its realisation I have determined to attempt it in connection with the Haslemere Museum. The dépôt is now open, under the care of Mr. E. W. Swanton.



pictures, &c., could all for the most part be adapted for circulation, and would be supplied in rotation to a number of associated schools. Only those most constantly in use, and the least expensive, would be the permanent property of any one school, and even of these no attempt should be made to display the whole at once. It is not necessary, nor even desirable, that a museum should be maintained in constant completeness of equipment or in monotonous good order. Apart from its other advantages—as allowing of the display without crowding, of a large array of objects in comparatively small space—change stimulates curiosity and attracts attention. During school terms it is assumed that the school-rooms and the refectory would accommodate only such of the museum contents as could be displayed on the walls, or at any rate well out of the way. The rest, that is almost all requiring table-room, would of necessity during these times be stowed away in drawers. It would be on holydays and during the three vacation periods that the museum curator's opportunity would occur. Then would be brought out from the drawers and cupboards their treasured contents, and then would be unpacked the boxes sent down from the dépôt. In preparation for these events, small committees of the pupils would be appointed to assist in the arrangement of the tables and the sorting of the specimens, all of which would have their appropriate labels. The task of arrangement would be an instructive one, and if a few objects got their wrong labels attached, the discussions which would ensue would not be without their advantages. Meanwhile other detachments of the pupils should be sent out into the fields to

collect for the vivaria all the flowers of the season, and specimens of all the snails, caterpillars, newts, insects and galls upon which they could lay their hands. It would be easily practicable to have a very good show ready within twenty-four hours of the breaking-up, and it would be one in making of which the pupils had themselves taken an intelligent share. Then would follow from outsiders the offer of valuable specimens on loan, and poor would be the condition of that town which did not supply a number of persons more or less well skilled in different departments who would be willing to give their help. Within a few days of the museum opening, it would be possible for a travelling curator to visit each in succession, correct errors and suggest improvements. In some places it might be possible to organise courses of explanatory lectures, or to form classes for special branches of study.<sup>1</sup>

The above is a brief sketch of a plan by which museums, well deserving the name of educational,

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<sup>1</sup> Twelve years ago I ventured to broach this idea. In my paper read before the Museums Association in 1893, I wrote:—

“I really see no good reason why we should not have movable museums which might be peripatetic. Why should it not be in the power of a clergyman or a Board School Committee, to devote the village school-rooms during the summer vacation to the purposes of a temporary museum? It would be easy to supply, from such a *depôt* as has been referred to, an attractive and instructive display of objects, which might be set out and properly labelled in twenty-four hours, and with them a curator competent to give explanatory lectures.”

With the exception of a little experiment of my own in the Board School Room at Hunstanton, in the summer of 1897, I am not aware of any attempts to carry out the suggestion.



might be placed within the reach of even our smallest towns. In larger towns it might, of course, be better to make the collections more permanent. It may be doubted, however, whether the advantages offered by the abundant space which most school premises would afford would not more than compensate for the inconveniences attending merely temporary exhibitions. Nearly all our large permanent museums are cramped for room, and only in a few instances could they be adapted for the reception of such miscellaneous accumulations of objects as I have suggested. Board school premises are ready to our hands and offer plenty of room, and even in our large cities a number of temporary exhibitions placed in them, and thus brought near to the homes of different sections of the community, would be much more useful than one large permanent establishment, necessarily at a considerable distance from most. These considerations apply with especial force to the picture gallery.

There are certain matters of detail which may, perhaps, suitably be here referred to. A great economy of space and saving of trouble may be effected by having the frames for engravings, maps, portraits, made with false backs and deep enough to receive a dozen sheets. By this contrivance frequent changes may be accomplished very easily. These frames should be placed on ledges, not hung.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The experiment of temporary picture collections has been tried in many places; notably, and with great success, by the Rev. Canon Barnett, in connection with the Hostel at St. Jude's, Whitechapel. The galleries which I now suggest would aspire to no sort of rivalry with these. They

A scheme for the display of the chronological order of events in the history of man, as well as one of geological times, should be painted permanently on the museum or school-room wall, and should be arranged on what has been called the "space-for-time" system. These schemata being ready on the wall, would afford guidance for the arrangement of the objects illustrating them.<sup>1</sup>

The constant repetition in museums of outline maps, in which are marked the habitats of different animals, is of great assistance to the teacher of geography. Not only do these maps give a sort of reality and practical importance to what might otherwise be little more than words and names, but by seeing them so frequently, and in different associations, the pupil becomes familiar with the contours and mutual contiguities of the different parts of the globe. The districts coloured on the museum map, as the homes of the humming bird, and the alpaca, respectively, acquire a new interest for the young pupil, and geography assumes in his eyes a new dignity. It is the same also with the derivations explained in museum labels of names derived from Greek or Latin. Whilst taking note as to the meaning of such names as *hippopotamus* and *rhinoceros* it is realised that the classical tongues are by no means absolutely dead, and that some passing acquaintance with them is very likely

have in many instances secured valuable original paintings. The Educational Museum of which I am thinking would collect only such works of art as could be obtained cheaply, and fortunately these are in the present day very abundant.

<sup>1</sup> Examples of what is meant may be examined in the Haslemere Educational Museum, and those at Selby and Newbury.

to be useful. These are amongst the minor and quite secondary uses of museums, but they are still very real ones.

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*Feeding of Children at Schools.*

I must now turn to my third topic, which concerns the fitting of the brain for the reception of instruction. It is obviously useless to expect from a pupil exhausted by want of food that attention which alone can originate memory. To attempt to exact it is cruelty. Nor is this the whole. The frequent recurrence of such exhaustion will tend in the long run to enfeeble the brain and retard its development. Yet further, it may be asserted, that certain articles, in daily use as accompaniments of food, exercise a very important influence in favouring mental effort. I allude of course to tea and coffee. Of alcohol it may be said that, excepting in the most minute quantities, it, for the time being, disables; but of tea and coffee it is probably true that, with the rarest exceptions on the score of idiosyncrasy, they prevent headache, ward off the tendency to sleep, arouse, and at the same time calm the brain and fit it for exertion. Employed in moderation, there are probably no drawbacks whatever to their use. Nor can there probably be any better guarantee obtained for the temperate habits of future generations than an early acquired preference for the wholly innocent stimulation which tea and coffee afford. Neither the schoolmaster nor the moral-reformer can afford to neglect them. I venture upon these remarks on the present occasion not from any design to lay down rules for school dietary, but

simply to illustrate its importance, and by way of preface to the statement that to a not inconsiderable portion of those who attend our elementary schools the conditions as regards feeding are very unfavourable. A certain number, we will hope not a large one, come to school almost breakfastless, and but ill provided as to dinner. Without any doubt a very large number come very unsuitably fed. As regards almost all, very considerable improvement might be obtained by the thoughtful attention to well-known principles.

### *A Suggested Scheme.*

Without further preamble, I will come to practical suggestions. In a letter which appeared a year ago in the *Times* newspaper, and which has since been supplemented by an article in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for February last, I ventured to propose a rather detailed scheme which I will now briefly describe. It had for its two main objects the improvement in various directions of school training, and the making certain that all pupils who were required to learn should be placed in a fit state as regards their feeding. Perhaps I ought to add that it had, not far in the background, the socialistic aim of affording to parents some legitimate assistance in the rearing of their children. The proposal was that all our State-supported schools should provide themselves with a kitchen and a refectory, and that the pupils should be required (or at any rate invited), to remain on the school premises during the two hours now allotted to the dinner interval. The girls



were all in turns to be employed in the kitchen and taught cookery, and the boys were to be trained to set the tables and to wait. The rest of the dinner interval was to be occupied, under the eye of a playmaster, in games, drill, and such other modes of recreation as the circumstances of the school and the prevailing weather might suggest. In some instances gardening, carpentry, map-making, drawing, or natural history observation might become appropriate pursuits for those inclined to engage in them. It would be clearly understood that nothing in the nature of a task would be imposed. The interval should be devoted to recreation, and the pupil should be allowed free choice, with the exception, perhaps, that drill would be compulsory.

I will assume that it is granted that the plan suggested would be advantageous to education, that it would be likely to turn out a somewhat better product. There remains the objection that it would be expensive, and the thorny question as to who should bear the expense. It would require the building of new rooms, kitchen, &c.; there would be the cost of the food provided, and there would be increase in salaries. As regards the additional rooms, I have already suggested that such rooms are needed for other purposes (the school museum), and that in the vacations they might perhaps be made a source of profit. As to the food, it is fair to argue that it would not cost the community as a whole more than if the children dined at home. Under good management it might perhaps cost much less. There would, however, still be the increased salaries, and, taking the scheme altogether, there is no doubt that it would

cost money. Some arithmetical statistician will, no doubt, attack the problem, and tell us how many millions the sum would amount to. It will look large, very large, we may be assured. Do not, however, let us be frightened. There is a Greek saying full of instruction which asserts that good things are hard, and a suitable adaptation of it to our times would be to say that good things are expensive. The question is, does the end aimed at warrant the expenditure—is the thing sufficiently good? The nation's tobacco bill runs to a total enough to take one's breath away, and make any patriot economist vow eternal enmity to the pipe. If, however, smoking tends to favour thought, to restrain passion, and, in a general way, to make the burden of life more easy to be borne, the sum that it costs may, after all, be money well laid out. Now, I cannot hesitate in the belief that the cost of the scheme under consideration would prove a very excellent investment. It would do good in twenty different ways at once.

First and foremost, it would send the rising generation into the world much better equipped for the battle of life, and its effect in this direction would be cumulative, in other words, it would be realised with increasing force with each successive generation.

Next it would relieve the burdened consciences of those who when, after breakfast, they take up their *Times* in front of a comfortable library fire, cannot escape the recollection that there are at that very moment many thousands of children seated at their school desks chilly and faint for want of proper food.



There would be a saving in the freedom from disease of the children during the school period, and their stronger constitutions in after life.

Employers of labour would subsequently find their gain in the better fitness for employments of all kinds of those who had in youth been well fed and well trained.

The dismissal of the children to their homes for the noontide interval must in many cases, and especially in winter weather, be attended by risk of injury to health, and under all conditions it constitutes a very serious break in the discipline of the school.

We have recently seen the origin of various well-intentioned organisations for the promotion of school hygiene, the teaching of cookery, and the avoidance of physical deterioration in general. The plan which I now suggest would serve all these purposes at once.

The addition of two hours to the time during which the children are under the control and influence of their teachers would be a valuable gain not only in the formation of character, but as allowing opportunity for observation as to individual aptitudes. Thus the efficiency of the day's schooling would be very largely increased.

The cause of temperance would be helped by the domestic and hygienic instruction given, and by the higher tastes implanted.

There would follow a reduction in pauperism, crime and insanity, by which the community would be both morally and fiscally a great gainer.

There remains the question as to by whom the expense incurred ought to be borne. In what has

just been advanced I have endeavoured to show that the community would be the gainer, and to imply that by the community a part, at any rate, of the cost should be found. Whether it should come out of the nation's exchequer or from the local rates is a matter of detail to be determined in the future. That no attempt should be made to exact money from the parents of the children, I feel clear. The community has for its own ends (but very wisely) withdrawn the child from the parents' control during certain years of its early life, and compelled its attendance at school. Such interference with family life involves the acceptance of responsibility. The parent is deprived of the services of his children, and he has a right to require their maintenance. That seems to me a self-evident proposition. I am unwilling, however, to seem to rest upon a supposed right that which ought, I cannot but think, to be accorded cheerfully by good feeling and a sense of social justice. The community profits by its population; it could not exist without it, and to leave the whole of the burden of the up-bringing of children to be borne by their parents involves such gross inequality that it is to some of us difficult to see how the well informed and the sympathetic can possibly defend it.

Although perhaps involving some repetition of what I have just said, I will venture to quote from one of my letters to the *Times* to which I referred at the outset. It may be that the argument is there stated more clearly.

"If it be admitted, then, that the plan would be in itself a good one, we next turn to the question as to who should bear the cost. I have urged that

when the State assumed the right to dictate to parents as to the employment of their children's time, it also took over to an equivalent extent the duty of providing for the children's maintenance. Let us make frank acknowledgment, once for all, that the State (that is, the taxpayers) should assume, as a matter of duty, the partial maintenance of all children during the age of compulsory school attendance. This would mean from the age of 5 to 14, and it might surely very suitably take the form of providing free meals on the school premises on all school days. Offered alike to all who had children to send, and paid for by taxes which would be levied on all, it would involve no stigma of pauperism, nor would it tend in the slightest degree to undermine the self-dependence of individuals. It would be simply the recognition of a State duty and an acknowledgment that some things are better done by co-operation than if left to unaided parental effort. It would not diminish parental responsibility. The horse would still be in the collar, although the load of bricks behind him might be a little lightened. There would still remain for the parent the provision of a home for his children, of their clothing and their food up to a certain age, and during all ages on non-school days. He would still have to provide for illnesses almost certain to occur. Under the present system it is not until fifteen years after marriage that parents can expect even from their first-born child any material contribution to the family purse, and for many years later the younger part of a rising family must continue to be, without mitigation, a source of expense. We must remember that it is during these years that the mother is likely

to be frequently disabled, and that during long months of nursing she may need an extra supply of food. With yearly augmenting demands on his resources, and probably no advance in wages, the husband may find himself compelled to restrict his own allowance of nutritious food and may fail in health. Add to these considerations the possible occurrence of accidents or other disablements, and it becomes not difficult to realise that during the period of compulsory school attendance the head of a family is in a position which claims our best sympathies. Would it injure his spirit of self-dependence? Would it in any sense pauperise him? if he were told that society had come to the conclusion that a part of the burden of the rearing and education of children belonged of right to itself, and that henceforward all his children whose attendance was required at school would, whilst so detained, be provided with good food? Would it not rather by making his life a little easier, and by demonstrating the reasonableness of his fellow-countrymen, conduce to a frame of mind favourable to self-denial and vigorous effort? Would it not, in the case of the exceptional few against whom a charge of neglect of the interests of their children can be sustained, strengthen the hands of those engaged in seeking their reformation? We have but to try to realise the difference in sentiment towards society of a father who had been fined, or perhaps imprisoned, for neglect to feed his children, and one to whose better nature an appeal could be made, which was backed up by kindly help. It is the sun and not the wind which makes a man take off his coat. It is, I believe, estimated that nearly a sixth of our popula-

tion are of the ages during which school attendance is compulsory. Perhaps it may be plausibly guessed that about an eighth or a ninth attend at State-provided schools, and would, under the scheme now proposed, be partially fed at school."

If I were to take a batch of my grandchildren to the British Museum or the National Gallery, I should certainly choose a free day. Nor should I feel that I had in any degree meanly availed myself of a privilege designed for the poor, or that I had sacrificed one iota of my self-dependent spirit. These institutions are national, and to the national funds which support them we one and all pay our legitimate quota. Their existence is an acknowledgment that there are certain things which are better done by associated action (that is, in this instance, by Government) than they would be likely to be if left to individuals. The problem before us is to determine what are the departments of activity which should devolve upon the community and what should be left to voluntary enterprise and individual responsibility.

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In concluding this address I may admit that I am conscious that I have exposed myself to the criticism of having dealt with three very different subjects. There is, however, I must assert, a natural bond of connection between them. I have urged that it would be for the advantage of the community if the Government, acting for the community, would undertake the supervision of examinations,



with the object of making them more uniform, less uncertain, and more helpful to students. Next, that inasmuch as under the plan proposed a very large development of the means for objective teaching would become requisite, the Government should undertake the provision of such means by favouring the establishment of educational museums, and providing depôts for the supply of objects. Lastly, I have adverted to the necessity which exists as regards a large number of the children attending our Council Schools, that measures should be taken to secure that they are suitably fed. With this object, and also with the design of greatly improving the opportunities for training and teaching, I have suggested that our day schools should be made to approximate to boarding schools in so far that the pupils should remain on the premises during the dinner interval and should be there fed. These three proposals are, I venture to think, closely connected. We cannot have wide education unless we perfect our objective methods of teaching, and for these what I have called Educational Museums are essential; lastly, we can have no good teaching of any kind unless those who are to be taught are suitably refreshed by food.

The suggestions which I have ventured to make are based upon the belief that a wide and sound education is the most valuable gift that the passing generation has in its power to bestow upon the rising one, and that provided the expenditure be judicious, we ought not to count the cost.



## POSTSCRIPT.

The scheme as regards provision for underfed children compulsorily attending schools, which has recently been promulgated by the Government Board, appears to me singularly unsatisfactory. It seems to proceed on the assumption that if the State compels children to come to school, it ought also to compel their parents to feed them properly. My position is rather that when the State assumed the right to compel parents to surrender their offspring to its guardianship during certain parts of their lives, it also took upon itself the responsibilities of a guardian, and ought to fulfil the duties thereto attached in a liberal spirit. The responsibility of parents in reference to the feeding of their children had been acknowledged before education became compulsory, and the parent who neglected to provide food for them was most properly amenable to the law. Such cases should be dealt with quite irrespective of whether the children concerned attend school or not. The community acquires no right to impose its behests in this matter because it requires the children to attend school. It cannot require the provision of more than the necessities of life. As a matter of fact, there are probably exceedingly few English children for whom such necessities are not provided. But to fit a child to profit by school instruction something in advance of bare necessities is most desirable. The child should have a warm comfortable break-

fast, which should enable him to feel bright and cheerful, before he is required to attend to his school tasks; a hunk of dry bread and a couple of radishes are not sufficient. It is with unsuitable feeding rather than with under-feeding that the schoolmaster has to contend.

It is now proposed to allow the school authorities to judge as to whether children have been properly fed or not, and to supplement the feeding when they think it needful. The cost of such additional supplies is to be recovered by legal process from the parent. Apart from its injustice, the plan is too cumbersome to work. Imagine a boy running his father into debt—possibly as a final result sending him to prison—by alleging for a few mornings at school that he had not had a good breakfast. Such schemes are not likely to make English homes happier. The number of cases in which such interference would be justifiable is probably very small, but at the same time it is probably true of three-fourths of the children attending our schools, that they are *quoad* school unsuitably fed. Nor will a majority of them ever be suitably fed until meals are provided for them, under skilled supervision, on the school premises. What we have to do is to rid our minds of the dogma that parents alone are responsible for everything which concerns their children. If once the glaring inequality of conditions between those members of the community who have to rear children and those who have not is fairly recog-

nised, there will be no difficulty in advancing in socialism so far as to recognise the duty and the interest of the community in affording such assistance as it can. In no more unexceptionable manner can such assistance be afforded than by assuming as a State-charge part of the cost of the child's school-life. The parent has still plenty of responsibility in other directions, let the State see to this. Nor would I restrict attention in this matter solely to those children who attend primary schools. If education for the less wealthy of the middle class can be cheapened by State aid, let it be done. The money would be judiciously expended.

The principle which I desire to maintain is that it is well worth while to fit those whom we compel to present themselves for instruction in the best practicable manner for its reception. The scholar should be fed with reference to school and not as a plough-boy. Suitable school food will never, as regards a large proportion, be secured, except by supplying it on the school premises. It would be easy there to provide a dietary, light, nutritious and easy of digestion, and to make certain that it was taken at suitable seasons. Nor ought we to forget that school feeding would include practical instruction in good and economic cookery for all, with not improbably a good influence on the development of food preferences.

There remain, I am aware, still some most well-intentioned persons who regard almost with terror

the proposal that the State should feed children at school, and think that by "diminishing parental responsibility" it would undermine the foundations of society. So far from any such result it would, I feel assured, give new life to and very much strengthen the bonds by which our social organisation is held together. As has been already said, the responsibilities of parents would still be very large. At present they are excessive. Parents are not, as some seem inclined to regard them, the self-indulgent enemies of society, but its prime benefactors, and they deserve its help in all directions in which it can be judiciously given. It is, of course, true that the parent is responsible for the maintenance of his children, but it is not true in any sense which would exonerate society from taking its share. Children are not solely for the consolation and profit of their parents, they are for the advantage of the whole community. It is at its own certain peril that any nation ventures to neglect the best interests of its rising generation. The school children of to-day will to-morrow constitute the nation itself.



